



## September Program

On the 24th, **Ann Horton** will present, “**It’s a small world - appreciating little giants**.” She will be considering stones that are usually overlooked because they are small. There will be stones that are *suiseki* candidates as well as *gongshi*. **Ann** will be talking about those traditions and discussing their commonalities and differences.

Because **Ann** hopes for audience participation, please bring in your small stones - whether or not in *daiza* or *suiban*. Come prepared for a lively discussion of what attracts us all to stone appreciation.

## Stone of the Month

Very small stones. When **Ann Horton** refers to “small stones” she is thinking mini.... Less than 3”. Bring them in and share their story.



This red near mountain can be held in one's palm...

## One More for the Road

“*We are on an endless road to achieve what we are looking for – enjoy every moment along the way*” - **Uhaku Sudo**

**Sudo**’s words describe the journey California Aiseki Kai has enjoyed since our first meeting in 1983. Personally, it is exactly how **Nina** and I see our role in steering our course on this journey. Aiseki Kai began with a single purpose, that is, to learn what we can about stone appreciation as it is practiced in Japan and we remain on that course. In the beginning, **Toy Sato**, who had studied in Japan, provided practical information as to the Japanese perspective as to what was and what was not a viewing stone and more precisely, what defined a *suiseki*. We learned basic classification of stones and shapes from the perspective of **Covello** and **Yoshimura**, *The Japanese Art of Stone Appreciation*. **Yoshimura** was an authority on Japanese culture. We adopted a more complete classification system when we received a translation of a flow chart in *The Introduction to the Hobby of Suiseki* by **Murata** and **Ei**. We learned more from **Ben Nanjo**’s *Unkon Fu - Soul of the Stone*. Each author’s thoughts varied, slightly, but there was a common thread - **the origin of all of the information was from Japan**.

In 1987, at the GSBF convention, we were introduced to Keido by Mr **Sudo**. He explained that Keido was a method of display emphasizing empty space (*ma*) surrounding the primary object. The purpose was to “maximize the expression of the beauty of nature”. **Hideko Metaxas** and **Bill Hutchinson** published accounts of this program and we have had several opportunities since then to learn more from **Sudo**. The only obvious variation from all these Japanese practices we have learned is the vast majority of our stones are found in North America.

All of these opportunities mixed, synergistically, to make Aiseki Kai what it is today. If we can display our stones to their maximum expression of beauty then we will have come a long way. We just have to work at it. We are still “on the road” of learning from Japan.

There is so much more to learn. Our goal for the future will be to continue our course and to learn more about the evolution of viewing stones in Japan.

Larry Ragle

### August Meeting Notes

by Bill Hutchinson

ANNOUNCEMENTS: New member, **Juneu Kim** and **Richard Aguirre**'s new dog were at the meeting. We talked about the coming stone show in Liuzhou and regretted the lack of time needed to arrange to be there.

We discussed our next trip to the Yuha Desert and settled on November 15-16 so save the date!

STONE OF THE MONTH - Stones that look like an ox [*dobutsu-seki*] for use in our show *tokonoma*: [No oxen were shown]. We saw two buffalo shaped stones - one belonging to **Larry** and one from **Jack Dennis** (sitting bull), the latter with pictures and classification information. **Harry Hirao** brought in a distant mountain and several other recently collected Eel River stones. **Tony Peredo** showed a green stone, also from the Eel River. **Tom Culton** had two white rocks [!] and **Richard Aguirre** had a Yuha stone, a hut stone, and a puddle stone. **Linda Gill** brought her small stone with an opening in the shape of a ground bird (a turkey from Turkey) and **Si Nguyen** had an animal shaped stone.

This turned out to be a difficult figure stone for most of us so perhaps our *tokonoma*'s ox will look more like an American bison.

**DATES TO REMEMBER:**  
Yuha Desert Trip ... Nov 15-16  
Huntington Show ... Dec 27-Jan 2  
Fantastic Stones Shows... See page 7



Linda Gill's turkey from Turkey



Si Nguyen's stone in 2 positions: a bird on the left and a ram on the right. It was purchased in Chinatown.



Larry Ragle showed his bison from the Eel River



Jack Dennis brought this bison, "Sitting Bull"

The 1 inch wide inner margins are designed for use with a 3 hole punch.





**August Program Notes**

*by Linda Gill*

Turkiye (all names are in Turkish) is one of the most interesting countries in the world. It is the crossroads between east and west and has so many historical/ archeological sites that they can not all be researched. We began our trip in Istanbul where we met a Turkish driver in a small Russian car quite by accident. The bad news was that it was the first day for the van and the driver but the good news was that we got a good look at the old city wall next to the Golden Horn.

We toured the Topkapi Palace which is now a museum. It has beautiful buildings and grounds and has collections of all kinds of Ottoman artifacts - clothes, arms, pottery, etc. The most popular exhibits are the jewels; some of them as big as a fist, and for the Muslims, the room with the relics of Mohammad. The walls are decorated inside, and some places outside, with fantastic tiles, mostly blue, showing flowers, geometric designs or calligraphy. The calligraphic signatures of the sultans are especially beautiful.



The Aya Sophia was built by Justinian and used as a church, then a mosque and now a museum. It is



Aya Sophia



Fresco inside Aya Sophia



The Blue Mosque

famous for its dome and its frescos which were plastered over when it was used as a mosque. It was the largest structure of its time and the dome fell & was rebuild several times. Sultan-hamet was built later to overshadow the Christian edifice and has a series of domes that culminate in the central dome. It is still a mosque and is called the Blue Mosque because of all the blue tile work inside. Both are fantastic architectural gems. Between

them lies the old hippodrome area which is now a park with a fountain donated by the Kaiser and two obelisks from Egypt.

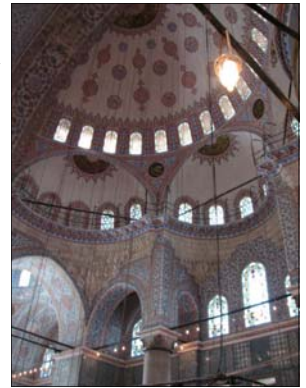
The spice market is a smaller version of the Grand Bazaar that is used by the Turkish. The Grand Bazaar is several blocks long and wide and is mostly a tourist destination. Bargaining is a requirement for tourists and is expected. Outside the spice market there is a large plaza with a sculpture garden of metal tulips. The tulip is the national flower and originates from Turkey, not Holland as you might have thought. Decorative tulip sculptures are found all over Istanbul.

A cruise along the Bosphorus Sea is a must. Historic and modern houses and palaces line the shore and fill the hills.

Modern bridges are next to medieval fortresses. Turkey is the only country in the world on two continents - Europe and Asia, and Istanbul is the only city divided by a sea. Three days here is not enough to even see a majority of the sites.

Leaving Istanbul we drove west along the Sea of Marmora which used to be the popular place to have a summer house. We visited the battle site and cemeteries of Gallipoli where thousands of men lost their lives in WWI.

We crossed the Dardanelles on a ferry because even today they cannot build a bridge between Europe and Asia here. Along the Aegean Sea the ruins of Troy are about 1 1/2 miles from the sea now. Troy was founded about 3000BC & had 9 different levels of habitation with the battle we know about being Troy 6 or 7. It was



In the Blue Mosque



In the spice market



Ottoman fortress on the Bosphorus



Cemetery of Gallipoli

## Ask Guy Jim

*Dear Guy Jim,*

*Again and again, collectors espouse with certitude that black stones are the Holy Grail of suiseki. Excuse the pun, but is this really written in stone?*

*Black Is Beautiful, But...*

Dear Bibb,

You are probably correct in your observation that the black stone is often singled out as the epitome of suiseki ... except for those holier ones that are black and also don't look much like anything!

It is often stated that dark, especially black, stones with rich, soft patinas are the most highly desirable material for suiseki. The Japanese predilection for somber stones may reflect ideals of simplification and reductionism associated with Zen practices and the more subtle nature of much of Japanese aesthetics in general. But while a desire for black stones is often expressed, one observes that most Japanese suiseki are not, in fact, black.

Unquestionably, the Japanese prefer darker stones. Extremely light colored stones are virtually never encountered and stones with significant color variation or bright colors would seem to be of limited interest for suiseki. [While books, such as K. Ishi's **The Essence of Stones** (1966) do show natural jaspers as landscape forms, these examples are often sharp, fractured and broken to such a degree that we, ourselves, would never consider collecting them if encountered on a northern California river such as the Eel]. Thus, one might debate to what extent the disinterest in using more colorful stones as landscape suiseki can be ascribed to philosophical reasons or whether it is primarily a reflection of a simple lack of naturally weathered colored-stone materials in Japan.

While the Japanese viewer may depart on a long meditative journey inspired by a stone, most viewers in the West are more likely to remain fixated on the stone image. Western viewers, and initially most novice viewers, require, even demand a representation of a recognizable landscape formation, object or image. From the vantage of naturalism and the suggestion of a believable landscape, the most realistic stones are going to be those with a more neutral tonality and of

grayish tint (1). The intensity of color and the degree of the variations of color that would be deemed to be acceptable as 'natural' is largely dependent upon the distance between the viewer and intended 'view' represented by the stone. During full daylight, when one views a landscape, even a pure black volcanic cone in the distance is observed to be gray or blue gray. [This is a result of the phenomenon of 'aerial perspective' – an effect caused by the scattering of the various colored wavelengths of light – long used to advantage by artists in the European tradition who learned to paint receding hills in graduated shades of blue – the most distant having the lightest tone]. Because my personal aesthetic vision is heavily influenced by both natural observation and the way color is used to control perspective in traditional European painting, I am drawn to landscape stones that encompass a subtle range of colors that suggest natural variations in landforms and vegetation

(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)





(2/3). Occasionally, stones with brighter variations (4) – where the color is visually logical – can also be exceptionally satisfying as with jaspers with rich, yet believable autumn colors (5) or desert mountains with exposed rock layers.



In nature, when the viewer-to-mountain distance is reduced, the colors become more intensely saturated. While deeply colored stones such as a classic dark green Eel River stone are eminently suitable for the representation of closer mountain stones, within the parameters of realistic representation, black stones may remain problematic. In the real world, actual black mountains are a rarity; mountains seldom appear black except when observed in silhouette, especially in low lighting conditions as at dawn and dusk (8/9). Gray of varying intensity and hue is far more commonly encountered. For the most part the color of rain, dawn, dusk, mist, cloudy days and winter gloom are all gray. Thus, being in contradiction to natural optical laws, the appreciation of the touted pure black stones is in one sense an inherently artificial, learned response rather than a natural human response to a recognizable image.

Having made such a bold statement, I must immediately qualify it by acknowledging that aerial perspective only comes into play when you have enough air, that is, space between you and the mountain. The phenomenon requires a certain minimal distance. With regard to providing a sense of natural images, one might argue that within the confines of a typical Japanese vista, especially with the addition of a bit of island gloom and rain, mountains may indeed appear to be muted and ill-differentiated, if not actually pure black! Having grown up in the Appalachian Mountains of the East, I can similarly relate to dark hills shrouded in rain and snow.

Why the emphasis on black stones? Black landscape stones are to a degree an intellectual construct rather than a natural visual representation of mountains. As noted, the Japanese predilection for somber stones is consistent with the ideals of simplification,

understatement and reductionism associated with Zen practices, the tea ceremony, and the more subtle nature of much of Japanese aesthetics in general. Specifically, it would be interesting to learn if the appreciation of ‘black’ perhaps evolved from associations with the black ink (*sumie*) and the ambiguous – indeed, at times indecipherable – forms of calligraphy and Zen painting? There may be loose links to the Zen concepts of ‘nothingness’ and the ‘incomplete’ – ‘black’ certainly leaves a blank sheet or open canvas to which one can only apply the colors provided in one’s personal internal palette. Finally, we should not overlook that in the Japanese volcanic environment, the simple availability of hard black stone may have seeded a tradition that builds on precedent.

In conclusion, we have noted that the appreciation of the touted pure black stone is likely to be to some degree an artificial learned response rather than a natural human response to a recognizable image. While I have explored various contrarian ‘looks’ at black



stones and our perception of landscape stones in general, I want it on record that I am personally very fond of black *suseiki*, whether ambiguous (6/7) or readily recognizable (8/9). In low light or silhouette they can do a more than passable job at placing this soul in a real landscape or an even better ‘place’ For me it does hold true that the less obvious, the less

**Program Notes**

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rediscovered by Schleiman who smuggled all the golden artifacts he unearthed to Germany. Excavations continue today.

Other ruins along the coast were Pergamum where Parchment was first made and where the temple of Tragen took 20 years to build; the Asclepion where Galen cured his patients by entertainment, reading, baths, massage, and mental imaging aided by opium; and Smyrna, where Homer was born, which is now the city of Izmir.



In the Asclepion, the entry to tunnel where doctors yelled through ceiling openings at doped patients "Tomorrow you'll feel better" & patients thought it was the gods speaking to them.

The most visited restoration is Ephesus with its reconstructed houses, mosaic and marble streets, library front with fantastic carving, baths, agora (market) and amphitheater. The 136 pillars of the temple of Diana were one on the wonders of the ancient world. It also was a port in its day and sailors arriving



The front of the library at Ephesus

A train museum with the personal cars of Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, and other historical engines was next to a rug factory where we saw girls weaving. Each girl learns only one pattern by heart and can change the colors by following a diagram. The secret to Turkish rugs is: the higher the number of knots, the better the rug; so always look at the back. Rugs can take months or years to make and are priced accordingly.

At Marmaris we boarded a gulet - a Turkish yacht. Each holds 14 guests and 3 to 4 crew. They are very broad so they do not rock when anchored front and back in a cove. Sailing along the Turquoise Coast, which Anthony gave Cleopatra as a wedding gift, we had beautiful views, warm weather and clear, cerulean water. We saw Lycian tombs on the Dalyan River, ruins of churches and a monastery on Gemelan (St. Nicholas) Island and hiked on Roman roads. Each night we stayed in different cove, many of which have small beaches

with umbrellas and a small restaurant. Small boats bring supplies and water, sell ice cream and 'coffee cake', and take away trash, sheep and passengers.



The ice cream man cometh on the Turquoise coast

Although very crowded during the summer, it was delightful during May - warm weather, cold but refreshing water, and few people. Five days later we debarked at Fetiye for the bus to Ontalya.

Ontalya has grown from 20,000 people to over a million in 20 years due to its warm climate and long adjacent sandy beach. A modern city with high rise apartments, its symbol is the fluted minaret near the old town. It has a delightful harbor and shops, with the ice cream vender providing the best show in town. The

museum has the best collection of statuary in Europe and you can still get a real Turkish bath here (but not in a hotel). It is close to Perge which had an agora with back to back shops and a water system designed as a stepped waterfall along the main street, and to Aspendos - the best preserved amphitheater in Turkey. It was used by every conqueror since its construction and has been restored and is still used today.



Ruins of Perge

Turkey has ruins and modern conveniences, Christians and Muslims, beaches and mountains, sailing and hiking,



Our guide - Ahmet, with a fertility goddess in the Efes Museum

Cappadochia, great food, and HISTORY, History, and more history. Don't miss it, it's fantastic!



**Ask Guy Jim** *continued from pg 5*



colorful, the less dramatic, in short, the more nearly ordinary a stone is, the more intimate and moving becomes one's ultimate connection. As awesome as a snow-crested mountain stone may be, it can never draw one back again and again as does a nearly non-descript little gray or black stone. The essence of the former may be largely ascertained at first glance, the latter may be contemplated for a lifetime.

*Guy Jim*

The views expressed in this column are personal, perhaps irreverent, irrelevant or just plain wrong and do not reflect the consensual view of California Aiseki Kai. Send your viewing stone questions (or comments) for Guy Jim to jimgreaves@roadrunner.com or 1018 Pacific Street, Unit D, Santa Monica, CA 90405 (310) 452-3680

**Fantastic Stones ~ Stone Shows:**  
**Oct. 4 - 5** at Manhattan Beach Hometown Fair <http://mbfair.org/>  
**Nov. 2** at Carlsbad Village Faire <http://www.kennedyfares.com/carlsbad.htm>

**Coming Suiseki Events**

**Beyond the Black Mountain: An Appreciation of Color, Pattern and Form in American Viewing Stones** In Washington D.C., at the National Arboretum. This exhibition features viewing stones on loan from **Jim & Alice Greaves**. Sept 4 - Oct 13. Free.  
**LECTURE:** The Art of Stone Appreciation, Sept 7, 1-2:30. Yoshimura Lecture Demonstration Center.  
**WORKSHOP FOR KIDS:** Viewing Stones, Oct 11, 10-12. Yoshimura Lecture Demonstration Center. Fee: \$19 (FONA/NBF \$16) Limited enrollment: ages 8 -14. This workshop will be taught by **Jim Greaves**, a stone collector and master of viewing stone display. Participants will learn about stone appreciation and create their own display to take home. All materials provided.  
**GALLERY TALK:** Viewing Stones & the Art of Display. Oct 11, 2 - 4. Special Exhibits Wing. Free. For details, see [bonsai-nbf.org/site/calendar](http://bonsai-nbf.org/site/calendar).

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**International Stone Appreciation Symposium**  
 3 exhibits, including a special solo exhibit by **Jim Hayes**, workshops, critiques, vendors, banquet, auction. 15 informative programs headlined by **Seiji Morimae** (Japan), **I. C. Su** (Taiwan), **Xiaoshan Yang** (China) and **Peter Warren** (U. K.). Also featuring **Kemin Hu**, **Thomas Elias**, **Hideko Metaxas**, **Pat Coen**, **Sean Smith**, **Jim Doyle**, **Arthur Skolnik**, and **William N. Valavanis**. For date, place and contact info, see page 8.

**Refreshments**



Thank you **Bruce McGinnis**, **Joe & Arlene James**, **Apinya Culton**, **Harry Hirao**, **Hanne Povlsen** and **Joseph Gaytan** for the August munchies.  
 September treats will be hosted by **Ann Horton**, **Lee Roberts**, **Kyra Haussler** and **Joseph Gaytan**.

California Aiseki Kai meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm at the Nakaoka Community Center located at 1700 162nd St, Gardena, CA. Second floor. We do not meet in Nov-Dec.

**Contact People**

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**Newsletter Committee**

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**Editor:** Nina Ragle  
 We hope you will participate. Please send any submissions to [ragle@cox.net](mailto:ragle@cox.net) no more than 10 days following our monthly meeting. Thank you!

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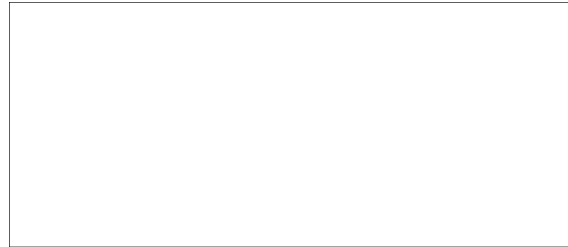
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



*Leaves no stone unturned*

See us on the web

[aisekikai.com](http://aisekikai.com)



## Coming Events

### SAN DIEGO BONSAI CLUB

43rd Annual Fall Show, Sept 27-28, Balboa Park, Casa Del Prado, Rm 101, San Diego. 10-5. Demos 11 & 2 each day. Sales area. Special exhibit in memory of **Mas Takanashi**. For more information: **Joan Berkowitz** 760.431.1014

### SALINAS BONSAI CLUB

Annual Bonsai Show, Oct 4, Lincoln Avenue Presbyterian Church, 536 Lincoln Av., Salinas. 11-4. Demo at 1:30 by **Katsumi Kinoshita**. Raffle. For more information contact **Don White** 831.724.9283, email: [whiteslib@aol.com](mailto:whiteslib@aol.com) or **Maggie Brubaker** 831.663.5044

### INTERNATIONAL STONE APPRECIATION SYMPOSIUM

October 2-5 at the Harrisburg-Hershey Holiday Inn, Grantville, PA. Exhibits, workshops, critiques, vendors, auction. For more info: **Glenn Reusch** at 540.672.5699 or email [stoneshow2008@aol.com](mailto:stoneshow2008@aol.com) (more on pg 7)

### CONEJO VALLEY BONSAI SOCIETY

5th Annual Bonsai Exhibition, October 4-5, Resource Center, Gardens of the World, 2001 Thousand Oaks Blvd, Thousand Oaks. 9-4. Demos in the Bandstand 11 & 2 both days. For more information: call **Ken Fuentes** 805.495.7480

### AMERICAN VIEWING STONE RESOURCE CENTER

Exhibition: *Beyond the Black Mountain: An Appreciation of Color, Pattern and Form in American Viewing Stones*, U.S. Nat'l Bonsai & Penjing Museum, Wash, DC. Sept 4 - Oct 13. International Pavilion, Special Exhibits Wing. 10-4. (see pg 7)

### DAI ICHI BONSAI

Annual Auction, Oct 17. Nakaoka Community Center, Gardena. Doors open at 6PM, auction starts at 7PM. Items include bonsai, *dai*, accent plants and more. Our very own **Joe James**, auctioneer. The public is welcome. For more information, call 310.545.5954

Here is the link to the Sept/Oct 2008 issue of *Golden Statements*. Those without high-speed internet may have better success by clicking on the pdf that's offered on the home page. This is an all new e-zine! Check it out.  
<http://www.gsbf-bonsai.org/goldenstatements/>



### GOLDEN STATE BONSAI FEDERATION

Convention XXXI, October 30-November 2. Modesto, Doubletree Hotel, 1150 Ninth St. **Boon Manakitivipart**, **Martin Schmalenberg** and **Tak Shimazu**. Exhibit, demos, workshops, bazaar, field trips, critiques, raffles, auctions.